

# *News from the Wyoming Department of Health*

Thursday, October 29, 2009

## **Another Flu-Related Wyoming Death Reported**

According to the Wyoming Department of Health, swine (novel H1N1) flu was linked to the death last week of an elderly female Laramie County resident with underlying health conditions associated with higher risk of severe illness.

This is the sixth flu-related death reported to the department since the emergence of swine (novel H1N1) flu in Wyoming; four of those were confirmed as due to the H1N1 strain. Four of the reported deaths were among residents between the ages of 19 and 64; two were among residents over the age of 65.

“Wyoming is experiencing widespread flu activity at a level higher than we’ve seen over at least the last 10 typical winter flu seasons,” said Dr. Tracy Murphy, state epidemiologist with the Wyoming Department of Health.

Since late May, 3267 flu cases have been reported to the department. Of those:

- \*541 were among residents younger than 5
- \*1742 were among residents between the ages of 5 and 18
- \*959 were among residents between the ages of 19 and 64
- \*24 were among residents older than 65

The department expects the number of actual flu infections around the state to be much higher, because most ill persons do not seek medical care or are not tested.

Over the same timeframe, the department has received reports of 87 Wyoming hospitalizations in connection with influenza. Of those:

- \*15 were among residents younger than 5
- \*15 were among residents between the ages of 5 and 18
- \*46 were among residents between the ages of 19 and 64
- \*6 were among residents older than 65
- \*5 were among residents for whom age information was not readily available

Influenza symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headaches and fatigue. Some patients also report diarrhea and vomiting. Actions recommended to slow the spread of illness include:

- When available, get immunized with both a swine flu and a seasonal flu vaccine.
- In general, people who develop influenza-like illness should stay home from work, school or travel until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever. Those who are severely ill (such as having trouble breathing) should seek medical care.
- Avoid contact with ill persons.

- Covering noses and mouths with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing, and throwing used tissues in a trash can.
- Frequent hand washing with soap and water or the use of an alcohol-based hand gel.

More information about flu in Wyoming is available online at [www.health.wyo.gov](http://www.health.wyo.gov) .

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